

# The Treatment of the Waste Water of Urea Fertilizer Plant with a Combined *Process of Advanced Oxidation* and Microalga *Chlorella pyrenoidosa*, *Nannochloropsis* sp. and *Pseudomonas fluorescens* Bacteria

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## I. INTRODUCTION

THERE are six urea fertilizer plants in Indonesia whose wastewater is characterized with high levels of urea and ammonia-nitrogen. The treatment of wastewater with high levels of urea and ammonia-nitrogen is one of the problems faced by urea fertilizer plants in Indonesia. Although the waste water of urea fertilizer plants is not considered as hazardous materials compound, it may cause serious damage to the ecosystem of water bodies. Industrial activities of urea fertilizer plants with the potential impact of causing environmental pollution is the disposal activities of wastewater into the waters. The efforts to improve wastewater treatment by separating ammonia have been done by using variety of methods such as: *Ion Exchange* [20], *breakpoint chlorination* [12], *aerobic-nitrification* and *anaerobic-denitrification electron* [1], *water striping* [29], *fluidized-bed reactor* [15], *anammox (Anaerobic Ammonium Oxidation)* [21]-[23], *combined nitrification-denitrification and microalgae* [25], *membrane reactors (MBR)* [28]. These ammonia separation methods have limitations, such as not being able to reduce the amount of ammonia up to safe concentration level, needing huge cost and the application of some of these methods in practice still encounters obstacles. This constraint is mainly due to the specific capacity of  $\text{NH}_3\text{-N}$  removal is still so low that the output process is still higher than the quality standards that have been set.

The activity of urea fertilizer industry with potential environmental pollution is the activity of wastewater in the waters. The main product of the fertilizer urea containing mostly liquid ammonia. According to the ministry of Environmental Affairs No. 122 of the Decree of the Governor of South Sumatra of the year 2005, the maximum pollution load for industry is liquid ammonia level of 0.75 kg/ton (50 of 6.0 – 9.0. The treatment of the wastewater of urea is done by means of combining chemical and biological technology of wastewater treatment by advanced principle using strong oxidizing agents. The process of can be combined with or followed by biological processes microorganisms such as microalgae *Chlorella pyrenoidosa*, *Nannochloropsis* sp. And the *Pseudomonas fluorescens* bacteria. The study on the treatment of the wastewater of the urea using Fenton reagent and advanced oxidation as follows: the capacity to degrade  $\text{NH}_3$  is 95% with a ratio of 1:10 and the use *Pseudomonas fluorescens* absorb nitrate and nitrite as much as 92.63% microalgae *Chlorella pyrenoidosa* as much as 99% and *Nannochloropsis* sp. as

Advanced Oxidation Process (AOP), *Chlorella Nannochloropsis* sp, *Pseudomonas fluorescens*

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... according to [10] biological waste treatment (microbes) will not run optimally or will be impaired if toxic chemical compounds are found in the wastewater. This will affect the performance of a waste treatment facility. In this study, the treatment of the wastewater of the urea fertilizer plant is carried out by combining chemical and biological processes. The chemical processing technology applied in this study is an Advanced Oxidation Process (AOP) or advanced oxidation processes of wastewater treatment which is a chemical processing technology with advanced oxidation using strong oxidator. This process of oxidation can be followed or followed by biological processes involving microorganisms such as microalgae *Chlorella pyrenoidosa*, *Nannochloropsis* sp. and the bacterium *Pseudomonas* sp.

## II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

### Material and Tools

Materials used in this study are volumetric flask, pH meter, pipette, Spectrophotometer, scales, aerator, plastic tubing measures 3/4 diameters, microscope, fluorescent lamp and the culture media, Petri dishes, transparent millimeter paper. The ingredients needed are water, distilled water, Nessler reagent, *C. pyrenoidosa* and *Nannochloropsis* sp. derived from pure cultures in the uncontaminated condition or other organisms. Water used is a mixture of sea water and fresh water) as the main source of *Nannochloropsis* sp with 3% salinity, while *C. pyrenoidosa* using fresh water, pH 8 - 9.5, temperature of 25-30 ° C. Bacteria *P. fluorescens* seeds from pure cultures in the uncontaminated condition. The composition are protease peptone 10 g,  $MgSO_4 \cdot 7H_2O$  0, 75 g, glycerol 7, 5 ml, drilled variable measurement including pH, density, nitrogen,  $H_2O_2$ ,  $FeSO_4 \cdot 7H_2O$ , Measurement of  $NH_3-N$ , urea, nitrate, nitrite, TKN, COD,

### Research

... from a pool emergency tube inserted into the wastewater is analyzed for nitrite, TKN, pH, COD, TSS) inserted control samples (waste water) into (reagent tubes). The tube serves as a react with the fertilizer plant wastewater and various comparisons are  $FeSO_4 : H_2O_2$  1: 1, 1: 3, 1: 10. ... at 100 rpm stirring speed setting ... and then the samples were taken after ... Then the waste water from the feed tube in reagent ( $NH_3-N$ , urea, nitrate, nitrite,, TKN, TSS).

- Waste water from in vitro reagent, flowed into aquarium / botolaerasi (aquarium microalgae, bacteria, bacteria + microalgae), the aerobic process. Later on leave for 7-9 days, because the growth of microorganisms reach stationary phase at 4-6 days. So that microorganisms (bacteria and microalgae) can decompose organic substances contained in waste water
- Water processed, the water that comes from aquarium / aeration bottle, then analyzed ( $NH_3-N$ , urea, nitrate, nitrite, TKN, pH, COD, TSS), which is useful to know the quality of the waste water from some of the previous process .

### C. Circuit Research Tool

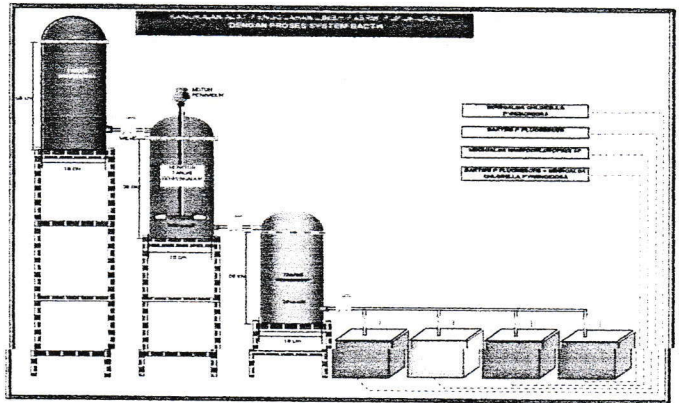


Fig 1. Circuit Research Tools

## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### A. Fenton Reagent Result

The treatment of the wastewater of urea fertilizer plant using Fenton reagent of various concentrations and comparisons of  $FeSO_4$  and  $H_2O_2$  causes a decline in  $NH_3-N$ , Urea, COD, TKN, and TSS, but an increase in levels of pH, nitrate and nitrite as presented in Table 1 . The results of the study show a precipitate  $Fe(OH)_3$  which is reddish brown, because the wastewater of the urea fertilizer plant used is that with the acidity (pH) levels of more than 6 [9]. The decline in the value of  $NH_3-N$  and urea in the results of the study presented in Table 1, is assumed to decompose to form ions and gases, such as nitrate and nitrite molecule, or nitrogen monoxide. This is in accordance with the findings of [27], that the levels of nitrate and nitrite increase. The levels of COD, TSS decrease, indicating that Fenton oxidation can degrade the value of COD and TSS. According to [2], Fenton reagent as one of the advanced oxidation processes (Advanced Oxidation Process / AOPs) is expected to destroy organic and inorganic pollutants, eliminate color and COD.

**TABLE I**  
**RESULT ANALYSIS TREATMENT WASTEWATER UREA FERTILIZER**  
**PLANTS FENTON REAGENT CONCENTRATION 2500, 2000 AND**  
**1500 PPM**

Parameter	Initial Ratio Analysis FeSO <sub>4</sub> (gram) : H <sub>2</sub> O <sub>2</sub> (ml)				
	1 : 2	1 : 4	1 : 6	1 : 8	1 : 10
Concentration (2500 ppm)					
pH	8.4	8.6	8.9	9.1	9.7
NH <sub>4</sub> -N	162.25	98	119.2	174	131
Urea	2195	1807	1884	2132	1895
Nitrate	2.63	3.50	13.45	37.75	109.69
Nitrite	0.921	0.99	1.967	3.715	6.84
Nitrite	0.921	0.99	1.967	3.715	6.84
TKN	1021.95	924.2	775	912.60	1031.26
COD	178	170	166	231	159
TSS	59	49	47	50	53
Concentration (2000 ppm)					
pH	8.2	8.5	8.7	8.7	9.3
NH <sub>4</sub> -N	9.25	0.15	0.013	0.012	0.0
Urea	695	713	702	702	529
Nitrate	0.010	0.21	6.35	6.35	76.8
Nitrite	0.056	0.039	0.056	0.056	3.89
TKN	373.65	239.55	327.613	327.613	181.533
COD	140	115	121	121	129
TSS	35	35	35	35	59
Concentration (1500 ppm)					
pH	8.0	8.5	8.3	8.5	9.0
NH <sub>4</sub> -N	0.034	0.15	0.091	0.0	0.0
Urea	157.05	713	37	32.45	0.0
Nitrate	0.034	0.21	3.9	16.93	39.89
Nitrite	0.037	0.039	0.037	0.245	2.7
TKN	73.424	239.55	17.266	15.143	0.0
COD	151	115	150	170	154
TSS	43	35	42	45	46

**Fenton reagent and Microalgae *Chlorella pyrenoidosa* and *Nannochloropsis* sp.**

On the treatment of wastewater of the urea plants using Fenton reagent and microalgae *Chlorella pyrenoidosa* and *Nannochloropsis* is a further research. The results Fenton reagent which indicates the increase of increasing levels of nitrate and nitrite at a concentration of 2500 ppm, 2000 ppm and 1500 ppm. This increase of NH<sub>4</sub>-N and urea is expected to be absorbed by the microalgae *Chlorella pyrenoidosa* and *Nannochloropsis* sp. as nutrients. The results of the study presented in Tables 2 and 3 show no changes in pH value during the treatment by using microalgae *Chlorella pyrenoidosa* and *Nannochloropsis* sp, no increase or decrease in the pH value is relatively stable during the treatment. According to [15], the pH did not increase due to the presence of natural buffer system in the form of dissolved CO<sub>2</sub> retained in the culture medium. The dissolved CO<sub>2</sub> in the medium will become carbonic acid which dissociate into ions. The results of the study presented in Tables 3 show the increase of COD and TSS values. This indicates there is an accumulation of organic materials in the wastewater resulting from the growth of microalgae *Chlorella pyrenoidosa* and *Nannochloropsis* sp.

**TABLE II**  
**RESULT ANALYSIS TREATMENT WASTEWATER UREA FERTILIZER**  
**PLANTS FENTON REAGENT AND MICROALGAE *CHLORELLA PYRENOIDOSA***  
**CONCENTRATION 2500, 2000 AND 1500 PPM**

Parameter	Initial Ratio Analysis FeSO <sub>4</sub> (gram) : H <sub>2</sub> O <sub>2</sub> (ml)				
	1 : 2	1 : 4	1 : 6	1 : 8	1 : 10
Concentration (2500 ppm)					
pH	8.4	8.6	8.9	9.1	9.7
NH <sub>4</sub> -N	135	35	105.75	124	129.11
Urea	1914	1893	1685	2075	1816
Nitrate	0.032	1.87	9.37	44.75	99.69
Nitrite	0.093	0.076	0.516	2.516	6.05
TKN	1028.2	763.07	892.48	963.095	983.243
COD	130	105	119	138	110
TSS	31	31	31	37	37
Concentration (2000 ppm)					
pH	8.2	8.5	8.7	8.7	9.3
NH <sub>4</sub> -N	9.25	0.15	0.013	0.012	0.0
Urea	695	713	702	702	529
Nitrate	0.010	0.21	6.35	6.35	76.8
Nitrite	0.056	0.039	0.056	0.056	3.89
TKN	373.65	239.55	327.613	327.613	181.533
COD	140	115	121	121	129
TSS	35	35	35	35	59
Concentration (1500 ppm)					
pH	8.0	8.5	8.3	8.5	9.0
NH <sub>4</sub> -N	0.034	0.15	0.091	0.0	0.0
Urea	157.05	713	37	32.45	0.0
Nitrate	0.034	0.21	3.9	16.93	39.89
Nitrite	0.037	0.039	0.037	0.245	2.7
TKN	73.424	239.55	17.266	15.143	0.0
COD	151	115	150	170	154
TSS	43	35	42	45	46

High COD level indicates an organic waste pollution. The inorganic materials found are in the form of clay and sand, and the organic matters are in the form of the remains of plants and other biological solids such as algae cells, bacteria and so forth [19]. Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that the rise of TSS levels is due to the growth of microalgae *Chlorella pyrenoidosa* and *Nannochloropsis* sp.

**TABLE III**  
**RESULT ANALYSIS TREATMENT WASTEWATER UREA FERTILIZER**  
**PLANTS FENTON REAGENT AND MICROALGAE *NANNCHLOROPSIS***  
**SP. 2500, 2000 AND 1500 PPM**

Parameter	Initial Ratio Analysis FeSO <sub>4</sub> (gram) : H <sub>2</sub> O <sub>2</sub> (ml)				
	1 : 2	1 : 4	1 : 6	1 : 8	1 : 10
Concentration (2500 ppm)					
pH	8.4	8.6	8.9	9.1	9.7
NH <sub>4</sub> -N	162.25	98	119.2	174	131
Urea	2195	1807	1884	2132	1895
Nitrate	2.63	3.50	13.45	37.75	109.69
Nitrite	0.921	0.99	1.967	3.715	6.84
Nitrite	0.921	0.99	1.967	3.715	6.84
TKN	1021.95	924.2	775	912.60	1031.26
COD	178	170	166	231	159
TSS	59	49	47	50	53
Concentration (2000 ppm)					
pH	8.3	8.5	8.7	8.8	9.3
NH <sub>4</sub> -N	0.325	0.075	0.073	0.078	0.0
Urea	925	631	930	923	543.34
Nitrate	2.23	1.65	9.5	27.31	71.8
Nitrite	0.567	0.676	1.39	1.39	2.05
TKN	425.92	263.715	335	370.143	31.21
COD	189	189	181	158	162
TSS	52	52	52	52	52
Concentration (1500 ppm)					
pH	8.0	8.2	8.3	8.5	9.0
NH <sub>4</sub> -N	0.052	0.0	0.002	0.0	0.0
Urea	326	296	138	63.03	1.56
Nitrate	1.34	1.34	6.56	19.93	31.13
Nitrite	0.470	0.774	0.567	1.10	1.67
TKN	156.02	103.96	61.302	29.585	0.728
COD	205	205	167	197	177
TSS	52	52	52	52	69

*Pseudomonas fluorescens*

of waste water using bacteria *Pseudomonas fluorescens* research, in which waste water of urea fertilizer plants is treated using Fenton reagent of various concentrations from 2500 ppm, 2000 ppm and 1500 ppm. The results indicate that it still contains high levels of nitrate and nitrite. The increase in the levels of nitrate and nitrite. The data presented on Table 4 show changes in pH, namely a decline. The reason is the reaction carried out by the bacteria that produce  $\text{CO}_2$  in the water will shift the carbonate equilibrium reaction of the carbonate:



Therefore, the reaction equilibrium will shift to the right so that it will lower the pH value. This is in accordance with the opinion of [16], that an increase in  $\text{CO}_2$  will lower the pH value of the media. The  $\text{CO}_2$  in the media is also allegedly produced from the decomposition of organic matter and respiration of bacteria. According to [26], the bacteria will use organic matter as an energy source, in correlation with the nitrogen to produce new cell. With the addition of carbonic materials, the bacteria will use the nitrogen contained in the culture so as to reduce the level of inorganic nitrogen (ammonia) which is toxic.

TABLE IV.  
TREATMENT WASTEWATER UREA FERTILIZER  
FENTON REAGENT AND *PSEUDOMONAS FLUORESCENS*  
UREA CONCENTRATION 2500, 2000 AND 1500 PPM

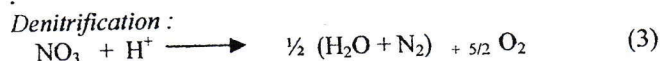
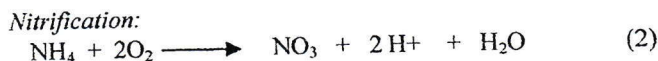
Initial Ratio Analysis	FeSO <sub>4</sub> (gram) : H <sub>2</sub> O <sub>2</sub> (ml)				
	1:2	1:4	1:6	1:8	1:10
8.3	8.4	8.7	8.9	9.7	
76.5	55	76.25	107.25	119.56	
1063	1080	1495	1479	1770.09	
1.29	0.98	0.67	32.78	92.45	
0.088	0.076	0.043	1.087	6.98	
894.18	727.35	697.91	727.44	928.60	
13	11	18	17	15	
10	12	11	13	10	
0.2	1.4	1.6	1.8	1.10	
7.8	8.2	8.3	8.7	9.2	
0.125	0.08	0.007	0.0	0.0	
303	306	693.67	583.07	300.4	
0.34	0.34	0.56	22.08	69.90	
0.074	0.034	0.023	1.024	3.053	
279.90	232.84	323.782	272.09	12.290	
15	15	15	19	14	
14	15	15	16	14	
0.2	1.4	1.6	1.8	1.10	
7.7	7.8	8.0	8.3	8.6	
0.075	0.003	0.0	0.0	0.0	
248	15	145.78	1.056	0.0	
0.62	0.26	0.91	17.45	69.90	
0.054	0.019	0.011	0.019	0.12	
68.95	6.093	0.207	0.482	0.0	
20	15	23	19	25	
15	17	15	17	15	

The addition of carbonaceous material is proven to be effective in reducing inorganic nitrogen [2]. Bacterial growth is also affected by the balance of nutrients in the water. Therefore, the

dynamics of bacteria population are closely related with the availability of nutrients [10]. The data in Table 4, show that the levels of nitrate and nitrite decrease. The decrease is due to the fact that the nitrate and nitrite formed are sufficient for bacterial nutrients that will stimulate the growth of bacteria and the increase of bacterial biomass. Although in low concentrations, nitrite is toxic to fish and other aquatic organisms [13]. Nitrite compounds in fish will be bound in blood that will form methaemoglobin ( $\text{Hb} + \text{NO}_2 = \text{Met-Hb}$ ). The Met-Hb would interfere with the transport of oxygen to the tissues of fish that can cause fish to experience hypoxia. The Met-Hb in the blood will cause the blood to become brown. Therefore, nitrite poisoning is also called brown blood disease [4]-[1]-[24]. The levels of Total Suspended Solid (TSS) and Chemical Oxygen Demand (COD) increase which indicates that there is accumulation of organic materials in the wastewater derived from *Pseudomonas fluorescens* bacteria growing in the waste water of urea fertilizer plants, which is in a state of non-toxic. Whereas the increase of TSS level is due to the occurrence of wastewater suspended solids which form residual components, floating materials, and suspended colloidal components. Suspended solids contain inorganic and organic materials. The inorganic materials are in the form of clay and sand, while the organic matters are in the form of the remains of plants and other biological solids such as algae cells, bacteria, and so forth [17].

D. Fenton Reagent, Microalgae *Chlorella pyrenoidosa* and Bacteria *Pseudomonas fluorescens*

In further processing of the treatment of the waste water of the urea fertilizer plants which contains high levels of ammonia and urea using Fenton reagent, it is expected that it will be continued with the use of a combination of microalgae *Chlorella pyrenoidosa* and bacteria *Pseudomonas fluorescens*. The microalgae and the bacteria will work together in degrading the waste water. The results of this study presented on Table 5, in general show that pH values tend to decrease with the increasing of maintenance time. This fluctuating value is allegedly due to the addition of the nitrification and denitrification bacteria into the maintenance media. The mechanism of bacterial nitrification and denitrification which can affect pH level can be described by the following equation [17].



Through this equation it can be seen that nitrifying bacteria in the process to convert  $\text{NH}_4^+$  (ammonium) to  $\text{NO}_3^-$  (nitrate) produce  $\text{H}^+$  ions that can make the pH of the maintenance medium drop. Since in a large-scale microalgae always associate with bacteria, the interaction between algae and bacteria will be able to purify river water. Metabolic activities of heterotrophic aerobic bacteria produce  $\text{CO}_2$ ,  $\text{NH}_4$ ,  $\text{NO}_3$ ,  $\text{PO}_4^{3-}$ , and so on. The microalgae absorb those

and produce organic matters, O<sub>2</sub>, and H<sub>2</sub>O. The produced by microalgae is used by heterotrophic bacteria for the reaction of nitrification and is used by bacteria for denitrification. Through the process of synthesis, microalgae using CO<sub>2</sub> from aerobic bacteria form cell protoplasm and release oxygen

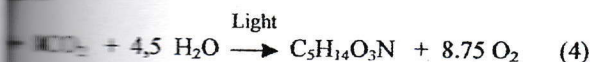


TABLE V.  
ANALYSIS TREATMENT WASTEWATER UREA FERTILIZER WITH FENTON REAGENT AND MICROALGAE *CHLORELLA* AND *PSEUDOMONAS FLUORESCENS* BACTERIA 2500, 2000 AND 1500 PPM.

Initial Ratio Analysis FeSO <sub>4</sub> (gram) : H <sub>2</sub> O <sub>2</sub>					
1 : 2	1 : 4	1 : 6	1 : 8	1 : 10	
8,2	8,3	8,8	8,8	9,7	
22,34	73,12	96,43	103,89	125,78	
1856	1620	1421	1500,03	1823,23	
0,97	0,57	0,56	41,43	103,89	
0,076	0,767	0,230	1,767	6,076	
853,88	746,13	663,56	763,90	986,62	
101	93	100	115	100	
59	59	59	59	59	
1 : 2	1 : 4	1 : 6	1 : 8	1 : 10	
7,8	8,0	8,3	8,7	9,2	
0,375	0,078	0,004	0,0	0,0	
597	520	485	660,65	0,0	
0,73	0,230	0,61	21,23	32,98	
0,062	0,729	0,096	0,729	0,97	
273,995	239,278	226,33	308,30	0,0	
136	99	105	119	114	
60	60	60	69	62	
1 : 2	1 : 4	1 : 6	1 : 8	1 : 10	
7,7	7,9	8,1	8,3	8,7	
0,025	0,003	0,001	0,0	0,0	
205	59	0,75	0,0	0,0	
0,26	0,86	0,98	16,98	32,98	
0,056	0,597	0,074	1,597	0,97	
94,32	2,309	0,346	0,0	0,0	
138	101	111	125	114	
62	50	62	62	62	

The main source of nitrogen that can be used by the microalgae are nitrate and ammonia-N. The bacteria utilize the materials produced by or derived from dead microalgae as a carbon source for the synthesis of new cells and to obtain the energy to form the final product such as CO<sub>2</sub>, during the process of respiration and synthesis. Microalgae use CO<sub>2</sub> as a carbon source for photosynthesis.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The best ratio between FeSO<sub>4</sub> : H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> in treating waste water of urea fertilizer plant using traditional Fenton reagent which meets the quality standards of waste water quality issued by the Minister of Environmental Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia No.122 of the year 2004 and the Decree of South Sumatra Governor No.18 of of the year 2005 is 1 : 4 , at a concentration of 1500 and 2000 ppm.

The treatment of waste water of urea fertilizer plants by means of advanced oxidation using microalgae *Chlorella greenoidosa*, *Nannochloropsis* sp. *Pseudomonas fluorescens* and the synergy between microalgae *Chlorella greenoidosa* and bacteria *Pseudomonas fluorescens* results in a decrease of pH, NH<sub>3</sub>-N, Urea, TKN, Nitrate and Nitrite and an increase of levels of TSS and COD. And the best treatment was using *Pseudomonas fluorescens* bacteria.

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